

PICTURECORRECT

How to Hold a Camera for Sharp Photos

Blur or lack of sharpness due to camera shake is a common problem for many photographers. It is caused by the movement of the hand(s) holding camera itself. It can cause you to take a completely useless photo from a good opportunity.

Luckily, holding a camera correctly is not that hard. You can find many guides all over the internet showing you how you should hold your camera. Since I am a big fan of simple things, I will try to tackle this with just one principle that you can apply for every single situation.

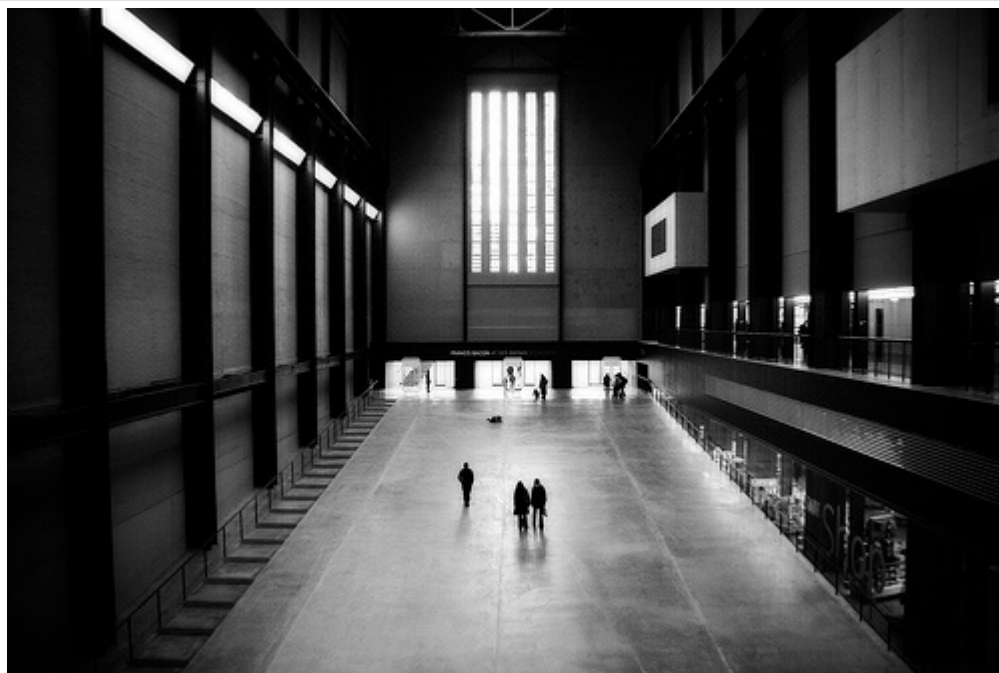


Photo captured by Beebo Wallace (Click Image to See More From Beebo Wallace)

Let's start with the worst case, what I will call the fingertip approach: You hold the camera in front of you with your fingertips. Your arm is extended, your fingers are extended, and the camera is shaking.

The basic and important thing to remember is:

The heavier your camera is, the less likely it is to shake. Now, before you say "I don't want to carry a heavy camera!", well, neither do I; and fortunately, there are ways to make your camera "heavier" without carrying a single gram more.

How? In the fingertip approach, the “weight” of the camera is just itself; say 200 grams for a small compact digital camera. Now try to think of something to combine it with so it gets heavier.

Hmmm...

Found it yet?

For starters, your whole hand! Let's apply the principle, one step at a time:



Photo captured by Mariliis (Click Image to See More From Mariliis)

Hold the camera with the palm of your right hand, instead of just with the fingertips. Now, your arm is extended, but you have “integrated” your hand with the camera, they move together. The “weight” of the camera is now the camera + your hand, say 0.5kg. You have about doubled the “weight” and this will be a little steadier than the fingertip approach.

One more step:

Instead of holding the camera with just your right hand, **hold it with both hands**. Now, you have a much more balanced “platform” for your camera, the “weight” of the camera is ~ 1kg. Be careful not to block the flash or lens with your left hand.

Ok, now its time to minimize the arm movement:

Instead of having your elbows at the sides, **have them rest on your chest in front of you**. Now, you have essentially cut out the movement of the upper arm, and fastened the camera a little better to a heavy object, yourself. If you do this, you will want to control your breathing when shooting, it is surprising how much your lungs move up and down when breathing in or out.

Now the motion of the camera is much more closely tied to your body, and the apparent “weight” of the camera is increased.

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The next step is to **cut out your motion**. If you are standing up, you will inevitably move a little bit. What you have to do as the next step is increase your apparent weight by “integrating” yourself to some heavier object. The technique that I use most often is to find a column or a wall and brace myself next to it. You can sit somewhere; lay down on the ground, whatever stops your motion. You can also try to brace just your main shooting hand on some still object.

Obviously, there are different styles for different cameras. SLRs or other cameras with viewfinders for example are inherently less prone to camera shake; because in putting your eye to the viewfinder, you often “integrate” them with your head, which is obviously heavier than your hand(s).

For an SLR, I find it best to hold the camera normally with my right hand, and place the left side of the camera in my palm so that I am holding the lens with my left hand fingers. (Thumb to the left, fingers to the right of the lens.) When shooting in the portrait orientation, I keep the same grip and always tilt the camera to the left (counter clockwise). I find that my right hand is always steadier when tilting to the left. This is what works best for me, you can probably use this as a good starting point to find out exactly how you feel comfortable.



"Battersea Power Station" captured by Ion Paciu (Click Image to See More From Ion Paciu)

For any camera, and any hand holding situation, just remember the basic principle:

Make your camera “heavier”.

About the Author:

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